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Message Text

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65
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 MC-02 EB-07 SAM-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /085 W
---------- 127797
R 091225Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3917
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
CINCPAC
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2001

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, IN
SUBJ: FIGHTER SWEEPSTAKES OUTCOME MAY BE MONTHS AWAY

REF: NEW DELHI 1909

1. A SENIOR BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION OFFICER TOD US
THIS PAST WEEKEND (FEB 7) THAT THE INDIAN DECISION ON A NEW
FIGHTER AIRCRAFT WAS ANYTHING BUT IMMINENT. OUR BRITISH
COLLEAGUE ALSO SAID HE BELIEVED THE GOI WAS PROBABLY SERIOUS
ABOUT PROCURING A NEW AIRCRAFT AND NOT ENGAGED IN SETTING
THE VARIOUS COMPETITORS AGAINST ONE ANOTHER PURELY FOR THE
EXERCISE. HE HAD, HOWEVER, NO VERY SATISFACTORY ANSWER
ABOUT FUNDING, REPEATING ONCE AGAIN THE POINT OTHER
BRITISH OFFICERS HAVE MADE HERE THAT LONDON IS IN NO
POSITION TO OFFER CONCESSIONARY FINANCING.

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2. THE FRENCH MINISTER-COUNSELOR LIKEWISE TOLD THE ADCM FEB 9

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SHE DID NOT THINK TIME WAS A PRESSING FACTOR. (THE FRENCH AIR ATTACHE CIRCA JAN 28 TOLD OUR ASSISTANT AIR ATTACHE THE IAF DECISION WAS AT LEAST THREE MONTHS AWAY.) SHE ADDED THAT DURING HIS VISIT PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC TOLD THE INDIAN THE FRENCH WOULD OFFER IDENTICAL CREDIT TERMS FOR THE JAGUAR OR THE MIRAGE F-1, BUT IT WAS FOR THE INDIANS TO DECIDE WHICH PLANE THEY PREFERRED. SHE, HOWEVER, HAS SOME DOUBTS AS TO THE INDIAN INTENTION TO ACQUIRE A NEW AIRCRAFT. THE COUNSELOR ALSO REPORTED THAT THE FRENCH EMBASSY HEARD THE GOI HAS ALREADY PLACED AN ORDER FOR MIG-21B'S. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMING INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT, BUT HAVE HEARD SIMILAR STORIES FROM THIRD-COUNTRY ATTACHES AS WELL AS FROM THE SOVIET AIR ATTACHE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE ANY MIG-21 DEAL, ASSUMING REPORT ARE ACCURATE, WOULD IN ANY EVENT BE SEEN BY THE IAF AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE WESTERN FIGHTER, BUT AS REPLACEMENTS FOR OLD IAF MIG-21S WHOSE AIR FRAME LIFE-EXPECTANCY IS EXHAUSTED.

3. ON THE BASIS OF EARLIER DISCUSSION WITH THE FRENCH AND THE SWEDES HERE WE THINK THE ASSESSMENT THAT THE DECISION MAY BE AS MUCH AS MONTHS AWAY IS ACCURATE. THIS WAS IMPLICIT IN OUR REVIEW OF THE SITUATION WITH THE SWEDES ON FEB 6 AND RATHER MORE EXPLICIT WHEN WE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH THE FRENCH ONJAN 28 IN THE WAKE OF THE CHIRAC VISIT (NEW DELHI 1492).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
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